

2-28-1832

Letter to C.W. Fitch

B.B. Smith

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Recommended Citation

Smith, B.B., "Letter to C.W. Fitch" (1832). *Philander Chase Letters*. 921.
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D. B. Smith

Lexington Feby. 28th, 1832.

Very dear Brother,

Since the deep agitation of your affairs in Augt. and September, I have hardly heard a word from any of you in Ohio. I suppose however, that I may blame myself for it, inasmuch as your note when you were on the wing for the East has never been answered. We too had passed through our agitations, which were becoming much more tranquil, when you were wrought into worst commotion. Before it was ascertained that a majority of the Standing Committee would reject the election in this Diocese, on the score of unintentional informality, I had retired from the conflict - preferring to incur a year's delay to continuing a vexed and doubtful question before the Church. Of course our affairs remain just there, until the passing moment. Should the lives of our few clergy be spared we foresee no difficulty in removing every technical objection; and even Br. Page assures us that the election will be unanimous. Were it possible for you to spare one or two Presbyters from Ohio, to make our case sure and to grace the election with a somewhat more respectable array of members, I suppose that we should escape a joke or two. But to all these lightening misfits, as you know, I have long been proof. It matters little to me where or how I am permitted to work for the good cause: what men may please to think or say, is of too little consequence to be thought of.

The probability of your movements finding their present level occurred to me, the very moment I heard of them. Still it neither did, nor does, now strike me, that any evil could come of your haste. Prudence, indeed, would rather have advised a year's delay, on so grave and important a question. But many advantages result from prompt and vigorous action. What would have been mere conjectures of opinion on the great questions involved in your case, are now ascertained and avowed opinions. In other words, before your next Convention and before the meeting of General Convention you will now know much more accurately what to do, than if your election had been postponed. In that case, by some informality or inac-
-curacy you might have been defeated: - in the present it will be comparatively easy to stir clear of such rocks.

From all that I can learn there is little doubt but what dear Bro. Milvaine will feel it his duty to devote himself to the Lord's service amongst you, so soon as preliminary difficulties are removed. It has from the first appeared to me, probably that you would be obliged to wait the legislation of General Convention, before the circumstances & conditions under which a Bishop in a case like yours, can be consecrated. But I have never entertained a doubt, but that the cause would be determined in your favour, and in ^{any} way so open and honorable that it could be no hindrance in the way of Bro. Milvaine's acceptance. You have but to affirm his election, and provide your delegates with the proper papers and instructions, to have the case brought before General Con: with all but absolute certainty of success.

I have been at some pains to give you my impressions upon this subject; fearing that some of our "croaking" brethren at the East may have been bothering you with sinister predictions. Opposition to any evangelical man, as such, can amount to nothing. There is, and can be no concert in opposing. All is & must be done openly and in the face of heaven, or sooner or later will be dropped forth there to the shame of the schemer. And the splits of the one party and the union of the other, would render us safe, even if reason and right were not on our side; and in the end sure to take effect.

I would thank you, in reply to my poor opinions, which are hardly worth having, to give me your facts. Have a majority of the standing Committee refused to act? If so which? And which have done, decorously & which not? What opinions have you obtained privately from Bishop and others? What is the gist of your difficulty? Have you yet settled your line of conduct? If so what is it? Do you think Br. M.I. will accept? What stand is Br. taking and what will he do in the business? Where is your grandam Bp; in what mood; & how employed? Above all tell me how Henry's fancy, and is like to do?

You have seen no doubt the strange account of Bp. (perhaps by this time Arch Bp or Cardinal) West, in a late New York Observer. What a commentary ^{his promissory ordination} on the fatal effects of departure from our wise & salutary laws! How humble and patient it should make us under delays, rather than force any thing against a good rule!

Remember me affectionately to Br. Sparrow, & accept both from myself and Mrs. S. the assurances of undiminished affection. Yours ever
B. B. Smith.

You will be pleased to hear that I opened a Theological class
some two or twelve weeks since which number 8 members
6 of them having the ministry of our church more or
less remotely in view

Sm,

Rev. C. W. Fitch,
Gambier, Ohio.

